

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
March 31 – April 8, 2010

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1. [With New START, U.S., Russia Commit to Disarmament](#) (04-08-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer



As Russia and the U.S. move toward disarmament, President Obama hopes others will see that nuclear weapons “make less and less sense.”

Washington -- The signing of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) demonstrates the commitment of both the United States and Russia to live up to their obligations as nuclear armed states under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to move toward disarmament and make the world a safer and more secure place, President Obama said following the treaty’s April 8 signing ceremony in Prague.

[The treaty](#) includes a [30 percent cut](#) in the number of strategic nuclear warheads deployed by the two countries, who together hold more than 90 percent of the world’s nuclear weapons. “We are keeping our commitments,” Obama said, and the agreement

will “set the stage for further cuts” in their nuclear arsenals.

“The United States and Russia are prepared to once again take leadership in moving in the direction of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons and preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, as well as nuclear materials,” the president said.

Under the NPT, countries without nuclear weapons agree not to acquire them. Obama said he believes more countries will come to recognize that their security in the 21st century will depend mainly upon their economic growth, the international community's capacity to resolve conflicts, and the strength of their conventional military forces.

"Nuclear weapons increasingly in an interdependent world will make less and less sense as the cornerstone of security policy," the president said.

While that realization may take time, "the key is for the United States and Russia to show leadership on this front, because we are so far ahead of every nation with respect to possession of nuclear weapons," he said.

The willingness of the two former Cold War rivals to continually work on reducing their nuclear arsenals "should indicate the fact that we are willing to be bound by our obligations, and we're not asking any other countries to do anything different, but simply to follow the rules of the road that have been set forth," he said.

The New START must be ratified by both the U.S. Senate and the Russian Duma before formally coming into effect. President Obama said there is "a strong history of bipartisanship" in the United States on arms control treaties, and described New START as "a well-crafted treaty that meets the interests of both countries."

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said that with New START, not only his country and the United States but "the entire world community has won."

"This agreement enhances strategic stability and, at the same time, enables us to rise to a higher level for cooperation between Russia and the United States," Medvedev said.

While the two countries still have differences over U.S. plans for a missile defense system, he said, "this is a flexible process, and we are interested in close cooperation over it with our American partners."

President Obama said he looks forward to launching a "serious dialogue" with Russia about cooperating on missile defense, and said the U.S. approach "in no way is intended to change the strategic balance" between the two countries.

According to Brian McKeon, who is deputy national security adviser to Vice President Biden, Russia's unilateral statement threatening the country's withdrawal from New START if the United States builds missile defenses is similar to other statements made by both sides during their long history of concluding arms control agreements.

Writing in an [April 8 White House blog post](#), McKeon said the Russian statement essentially gives "fair notice" that Russia could pull out of the new treaty if it believes the U.S. missile defense system affects strategic stability.

"We believe it doesn't, and the president has made clear that he is committed to continuing to develop and deploy that system," McKeon said.

WORLD AT RISK FROM IRANIAN, NORTH KOREAN ACTIVITIES

President Obama said the spread of nuclear weapons constitutes “an unacceptable risk to global security,” citing the danger of regional arms races due to the nuclear activities of North Korea and Iran, and said there must be “accountability for those that break the rules,” or else the NPT risks becoming “just words on a page.”

Nuclear weapons proliferation would allow states to “blackmail other countries,” create global security risks by not effectively securing nuclear material from theft, and raise the danger of “passing them on to terrorist organizations.” Without effective enforcement of international law, “we could find ourselves in a world in which not only state actors but also potentially non-state actors are in possession of nuclear weapons, and even if they don’t use them, would then be in a position to terrorize the world community,” Obama said.

With those risks in mind, the president said the United States and Russia are working together to pass strong sanctions against Iran in the U.N. Security Council.

“We’re going to start seeing some ramped-up negotiations taking place in New York in the coming weeks. And my expectation is that we are going to be able to secure strong, tough sanctions on Iran this spring,” the president said.

President Medvedev said Iran is not responding to “constructive proposals” from the international community that are aimed at allowing it to pursue peaceful nuclear energy while providing assurances that it is not developing nuclear weapons. “We cannot turn a blind eye to this,” he said.

While “sanctions by themselves seldom obtain specific results,” the Russian president said it is “difficult to do without them in certain situations,” and urged for “smart sanctions that are capable of producing proper behavior on the part of relevant sides.”

2. Secretary Clinton on Nuclear Security Strategy (04-08-2010)

Clinton outlines steps to reduce global threat of nuclear weapons

The following op-ed by Secretary Clinton was originally published in [The Guardian](#) newspaper in the United Kingdom and is also appearing in Germany’s Berliner Zeitung, Frankfurter Rundschau, Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger and Mitteldeutsche Zeitung.

Our Giant Step Towards a World Free from Nuclear Danger

This treaty shows the strength of America’s commitment to global disarmament – and to our national security

By Hillary Rodham Clinton

Today the United States and Russia will sign the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) in Prague, reducing the number of strategic nuclear warheads in our arsenals to levels not seen since the first decade of the nuclear age. This verifiable reduction by the world’s two largest nuclear powers reflects our commitment to the basic bargain of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) -- all nations have the right to seek the peaceful use of nuclear energy, but they all also have the responsibility to prevent nuclear proliferation, and those that do possess these weapons must work toward disarmament.

This agreement is just one of several concrete steps the United States is taking to make good on President Obama's pledge to make America and the world safer by reducing the threat of nuclear weapons, proliferation and terrorism.

On Tuesday (April 6), the President announced the U.S. Government's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), which provides a roadmap for reducing the role and numbers of our nuclear weapons while more effectively protecting the United States and our allies from today's most pressing threats.

Next week, President Obama will host more than 40 leaders at a Nuclear Security Summit for the purpose of securing all vulnerable nuclear materials as swiftly as possible to prevent them from falling into the hands of terrorists.

And along with our international partners, the United States is pursuing diplomatic efforts that create real consequences for states such as Iran and North Korea that defy the global nonproliferation regime.

These steps send clear messages about our priorities and our resolve.

To our allies and partners, and all those who have long looked to the United States as an underwriter of regional and global security: Our commitment to defend our interests and our allies has never been stronger. These steps will make us all safer and more secure.

To those who refuse to meet their international obligations and seek to intimidate their neighbors: The world is more united than ever before and will not accept your intransigence.

Today's agreement is a testament to our own determination to meet our obligations under the NPT and the special responsibilities that the United States and Russia bear as the two largest nuclear powers.

The New START Treaty includes a 30 percent reduction in the number of strategic nuclear warheads the United States and Russia are permitted to deploy and a strong and effective verification regime, which will further stabilize the relationship between our two countries as well as reduce the risks of miscommunication or miscalculation.

And the Treaty places no constraints on our missile defense plans – now or in the future.

President Obama's Nuclear Posture Review makes the principles behind this Treaty – and our larger nonproliferation and arms control agenda – part of our national security strategy. Today nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism have replaced the Cold War-era danger of a large-scale nuclear attack as the most urgent threat to U.S. and global security. The NPR outlines a new approach that will ensure that our defenses and diplomacy are geared toward meeting these challenges effectively.

As part of this new approach, the United States pledges not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear weapons state that is party to the NPT and in compliance with its nuclear nonproliferation obligations. The United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners. There should be no doubt, however, that we will hold fully accountable any state, terrorist group, or other non-state actor that supports or enables terrorist efforts to obtain or use weapons of mass destruction.

The NPR also emphasizes close cooperation with our allies around the world, and maintains our firm commitment to mutual security. We will work with our partners to reinforce regional security architectures, such as missile defenses, and other conventional military capabilities. The United States will continue to maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent for ourselves and our allies so long as these weapons exist anywhere in the world.

Nuclear proliferation and terrorism are global challenges, and they demand a global response. That is why President Obama has invited leaders from around the world to Washington for a Nuclear Security Summit and will seek commitments from all nations – especially those that enjoy the benefits of civilian nuclear power – to take steps to stop proliferation and secure vulnerable nuclear materials. If terrorists ever acquired these dangerous materials, the results would be too terrible to imagine.

All nations must recognize that the nonproliferation regime cannot survive if violators are allowed to act with impunity. That is why we are working to build international consensus for steps that will convince Iran's leaders to change course, including new UN Security Council sanctions that will further clarify their choice of upholding their obligations or facing increasing isolation and painful consequences. With respect to North Korea, we continue to send the message that simply returning to the negotiating table is not enough. Pyongyang must move toward complete and verifiable denuclearization, through irreversible steps, if it wants a normalized, sanctions-free relationship with the United States.

All these steps, all our treaties, summits and sanctions, share the goal of increasing the security of the United States, our allies, and people everywhere.

Last April, President Obama stood in Hradcany Square in Prague and challenged the world to pursue a future free of the nuclear dangers that have loomed over us all for more than a half century. This is the work of a lifetime, if not longer. But today, one year later, we are making real progress toward that goal.

3. Analysis: U.S. Nuclear Strategy Redefines Deterrence (04-07-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama's new nuclear arms strategy aims to retain nuclear weapons to deter any primary threat of a nuclear strike on the U.S. homeland, while also furthering his ultimate goal of making them obsolete.

The strategy, contained in a 72-page report — the Nuclear Posture Review Report (NPR) — produced jointly by the Defense, State and Energy departments and the National Security Council, addresses what is believed to be the mostly likely threats in the coming decade — terrorists obtaining nuclear materials for “dirty” bombs and an increase in global nuclear proliferation spawned by additional nuclear-armed states. States acquiring nuclear capabilities would provide the more alarming dilemma of an unending proliferation cycle that would destabilize whole regions of the world.

The [NPR](#) (PDF, 2.7MB) cites a reduction in the role of nuclear weapons in the overall U.S. national security strategy, and comes as the Obama administration reduces its nuclear stockpiles through the

recently concluded new [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty](#) (START), maintains the nearly 20-year U.S. moratorium on nuclear testing and says it will not build any additional nuclear weapons.

At the same time, it seeks to dissuade others from seeking their own nuclear arsenals by pledging not to use nuclear weapons on nations that are in compliance with the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and nuclear nonproliferation obligations. The strategy also reassures U.S. friends and allies that the American nuclear deterrent will remain only “as long as nuclear weapons exist,” and will be strong enough that they will have no need to develop their own.

Coming one year after [President Obama’s April 5, 2009](#), speech in which he called for concrete steps to eradicate nuclear weapons from the world, the NPR is a clear statement that while the international security environment that existed during the Cold War years has changed, “the risk of nuclear attack has increased.”

During the decades-long standoff between the United States and the former Soviet Union, the concept of mutual assured destruction helped to dissuade both countries from using their nuclear arsenal, since the leaders of both countries were well aware that any nuclear strike would invite a full and debilitating retaliation. The NPR recognizes that the adversarial relationship between the United States and the Russian Federation has ended, and both countries, as well as other nuclear armed powers such as China, now face the common 21st-century threats of nuclear terrorism and unsustainable nuclear proliferation.

“Al-Qaida and their extremist allies are seeking nuclear weapons. We must assume they would use such weapons if they managed to obtain them,” the report states. Along with the willingness of violent extremists to target civilians, the traditional notion of deterrence loses its effectiveness when faced with adversaries who are willing to sacrifice their own lives to inflict massive casualties, it says.

Therefore, the NPR places high importance on preventing extremists and nonstate entities from obtaining nuclear materials, equipment and technologies. The president’s convening of the April 12–13 [nuclear security summit](#) in Washington is focused on obtaining wide international agreement on how to secure all of the world’s nuclear material within four years to prevent it from being stolen or seized.

The other principal nuclear weapons threat comes from states like North Korea and Iran, which by pursuing their own nuclear weapons programs and missile delivery capabilities in violation of international law, risk not only adding to the existing level of available weapons components and technology, but could provoke their neighbors into developing their own nuclear deterrent, and consequently even greater proliferation of nuclear weapons.

“Continued non-compliance with non-proliferation norms by these and other countries would seriously weaken the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), with adverse security implications for the United States and the international community at large,” the NPR states.

While the United States pledges not to use nuclear weapons against NPT-compliant states that are meeting their obligations, the report sees a “narrow range of contingencies” in which the U.S. nuclear arsenal can help deter a conventional, chemical or biological attack from states that are not compliant.

“That does not mean that our willingness to use nuclear weapons against countries not covered by the new assurance has in any way increased. Indeed, the United States wishes to stress that it would

only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners,” the NPR states.

As Vice President Biden said in an April 7 article, this separate approach toward states observing international nonproliferation norms versus those who are not provides additional security incentives for continued compliance, while ensuring that those in defiance “will be more isolated and less secure.”

A senior Defense Department official told reporters in an [April 6 background briefing](#) that the president considers the NPR “a foundational document of his administration” that reflects both his thinking and his leadership.

The NPR offers “a concrete, pragmatic work plan” for moving forward the president’s agenda of a world without nuclear weapons, the official said, and is closely integrated with concurrent U.S. policy and strategy developments, such as START, the nuclear security summit and the upcoming NPT Review Conference at the United Nations in New York in May.

4. Vice President Biden on a Comprehensive Nuclear Arms Strategy (04-07-2010) **Op-ed highlights U.S. efforts to reduce the role of nuclear weapons**

The following op-ed by Vice President Joe Biden was published in today’s Los Angeles Times:

A Comprehensive Nuclear Arms Strategy

The administration’s Nuclear Posture Review outlines the means to achieve greater security from worldwide nuclear dangers. Nonproliferation and counter-terrorism are central to the strategy.

By Joe Biden

When I joined the Senate in 1973, crafting nuclear policy meant mastering arcane issues like nuclear stability and deterrence theory. With the end of the Cold War and a new relationship between our country and Russia, thankfully these subjects no longer dominate public discourse. Today, the danger of deliberate, global nuclear war has all but disappeared, but the nuclear threats we face from terrorists and non-nuclear states seeking to acquire such weapons are graver than ever.

On Tuesday, President Obama took an important step toward addressing these threats by releasing a plan that will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy while ensuring that our nuclear arsenal remains safe, secure and effective for as long as it is needed. The Nuclear Posture Review outlines a strategy, supported unanimously by the national security cabinet, for greater security from nuclear dangers and implements the agenda that President Obama first outlined in Prague just over a year ago to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and to pursue the peace and security of a world without them.

This new strategy, a sharp departure from previous Nuclear Posture Reviews released in 2001 and 1994, leaves Cold War thinking behind. It recognizes that the greatest threat to U.S. and global security is no longer a nuclear exchange between nations, but nuclear terrorism by extremists and the spread of nuclear weapons to an increasing number of states. From now on, decisions about the number of weapons we have and how they are deployed will take nonproliferation and counter-terrorism into account, rather than being solely based on the objective of stable deterrence.

The review contains a clear rationale for the reductions called for under the New START treaty -- a 30% reduction from the previous agreement. Because of advances in conventional capabilities and technologies such as missile defense, we need fewer nuclear weapons to deter adversaries and protect our allies than we did even a decade ago. Under the new review, we will retain only those weapons needed for our core requirements.

The plan also establishes a policy that the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states, as long as they are party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations. This approach provides additional incentive for countries to fully comply with nonproliferation norms. Those that do not will be more isolated and less secure.

The completion of a Nuclear Posture Review that is grounded in a commitment to American security will better protect us and our allies from nuclear threats. So will the signing of the New START treaty Thursday. And the unprecedented Nuclear Security Summit the president will host next week -- with its focus on securing vulnerable nuclear materials around the world in four years - - will advance these goals still further.

At the same time, the president is determined to ensure that our nuclear weapons remain absolutely safe, secure and effective. That is why he has asked Congress to increase funding for our nuclear complex by \$5 billion over the next five years, allowing us to upgrade aging facilities and recruit and retain the highly skilled scientists and engineers needed to sustain our arsenal. Our plan reverses a decade-long erosion in support for the national laboratories. This commitment will ensure that our arsenal remains ready.

We can achieve these objectives while upholding this country's nearly two-decade moratorium on nuclear tests and continuing our efforts to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. And although we will not develop new warheads or add military capabilities as we manage our arsenal for the future, we will pursue needed life-extension programs so the weapons we retain can be sustained. This approach has broad support, and, as Defense Secretary Robert Gates states in his preface to the Nuclear Posture Review, it is a "credible modernization plan necessary to sustain the nuclear infrastructure and support our nation's deterrent."

The president and I made a promise to the American people to protect them from nuclear risks. We have no higher obligation. Our strategy delivers on that promise and tackles the most immediate threats our planet faces.

5. Obama Administration Revamps Nuclear Policy (04-06-2010)

Washington — The Obama administration issued a new U.S. nuclear strategy April 6 that sharply narrows the use of nuclear weapons, but maintains their traditional role to deter a nuclear strike against the United States.

[The Nuclear Posture Review](#) (PDF, 2.7MB) was unveiled at a Pentagon briefing by Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Admiral Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The review of the nation's nuclear policy is the first since 2001 and the third since the end of the Cold War two decades ago. A review of U.S. nuclear policy is conducted at the start of every new administration; it influences federal spending, treaties, weapon deployments and their eventual retirement over the next five to 10 years.

The new policy defines measures to strengthen the global nonproliferation regime, with emphasis on the importance of international treaties such as the 1970 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. And it specifically renews a U.S. commitment to hold accountable those who provide terrorists with nuclear weapons or the materials to make them.

“The NPR provides a road map for implementing President Obama’s agenda for reducing nuclear risks to the United States, our allies and partners and the international community,” Gates said at the Pentagon briefing. “This review describes how the United States will reduce the role and numbers of nuclear weapons with a long-term goal of a nuclear-free world.”

Clinton told reporters the review is a milestone in transforming U.S. nuclear forces and the way in which the nation approaches nuclear issues.

“We are recalibrating our priorities to prevent nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, and we are reducing the role and number of weapons in our arsenal, while maintaining a safe, secure and effective deterrent to protect our nation, allies and partners,” she said.

Release of the strategy in Washington begins nine days of intensive nuclear diplomacy. Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev will meet in Prague April 8 to sign the new START treaty, designed to limit both nations’ nuclear arsenals to 1,550 warheads each, reduce deployed strategic delivery vehicles to 700, and limit deployed and nondeployed launchers to 800. Obama will host more than 40 world leaders at a nuclear security summit in Washington April 12–13 aimed at halting the spread of nuclear weapons and related technology.

Following this series of events, representatives from around the world will converge on the United Nations in New York May 3–28 for debate and review of the NPT, in part to determine if it needs to be amended or expanded. The review process is held approximately every five years.

NPR: FIVE KEY OBJECTIVES

At the Pentagon briefing, Gates told reporters that the Nuclear Posture Review includes significant changes to the U.S. nuclear posture. It focuses on five key objectives.

- The policy emphasizes the prevention of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism.
- It reduces the role of nuclear weapons in American national security by committing the United States to not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear states that participate in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and are in compliance with its requirements. That policy includes instances of chemical and biological attack, but with some reservations.
- While the United States agrees to reduce its nuclear arsenal in a new treaty with Russia, the policy will maintain the traditional role of strategic deterrence and stability of the nuclear arsenal and the means to deliver them by long-range missiles, nuclear submarines and heavy bombers.
- NPR calls for a broadened regional security structure that includes missile defenses and improved conventional forces. The United States will retain the capability to forward-deploy U.S. nuclear weapons on fighter-bombers and heavy bombers.

- The policy requires the United States to sustain a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal as long as nuclear weapons exist. But the United States will not conduct new nuclear testing, and will not develop new nuclear warheads.

DISSUADING COUNTRIES FROM DEVELOPING WEAPONS

The Obama administration is encouraging global compliance with the NPT. Under the treaty, countries with nuclear weapons agree to move toward disarmament, while countries without nuclear weapons agree not to acquire them, and all have the right to peaceful nuclear energy.

According to the text of the Nuclear Posture Review, “the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear weapons states that are party to the NPT and in compliance with their nuclear nonproliferation obligations.”

Speaking at the Pentagon April 6, Jim Miller, the principal deputy under secretary of defense for policy, said the vast majority of countries are compliant with the NPT. If any should decide to use chemical or biological weapons (CBW) against the United States, its partners or its allies, they “face the prospect of a devastating conventional military response,” he said, rather than a nuclear attack. Miller said U.S. conventional forces and strike capabilities are developing additional capabilities to create greater deterrence for the use of CBW. However, he said the defense posture could be revised if the United States finds itself unable to cope with a growing threat from those weapons.

Miller said the Obama administration wants its defense posture to dissuade countries from developing nuclear weapons.

“If you are a country considering proliferation ... you put yourself in a different category with respect to our nuclear capabilities,” he said. As the United States continues to develop its conventional and missile-defense capabilities to counter weapons of mass destruction, the hope is that “these states will see less and less of an advantage to going down that path.”

[Nuclear Posture Review Report: Executive Summary](#)

6. Intensive Two Months Ahead to Boost Nonproliferation Efforts (04-05-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The agreement between the United States and Russia to reduce their nuclear arsenals under the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) marks an important step toward President Obama’s vision of a world without nuclear weapons. It also marks the start of what will be an intensive two months as his administration seeks support from the international community to safeguard the world’s nuclear material from extremists and traffickers and to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Ambassador Susan Burk, the president’s special representative for nuclear nonproliferation, told an audience at a State Department conference March 30 that the START agreement was “a very significant accomplishment,” and that as its details emerge, the world will appreciate “how truly

complex this agreement was and how amazing it was that they were able to conclude this in under a year.”

But with START accomplished, efforts are under way to reach a wide international consensus on securing nuclear materials and strengthening the NPT, as well as moves to cut off the production of fissile materials and achieve U.S. Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). “The U.S., now at the highest levels, is trying to get these done and finish these up so we can move on to the next steps” toward the goal of ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons, Burk said.

Before more than 40 nations gather in Washington April 12–13 for the Nuclear Security Summit, President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev will have signed the new START in Prague April 8. The White House also announced that the president will release an updated nuclear posture review April 6 that Burk said “will demonstrate the move toward reducing the role of nuclear weapons” in U.S. national security strategy.

Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins, the coordinator for threat reduction programs at the State Department, said the Nuclear Security Summit aims at reaching “a common understanding of the threat posed by nuclear terrorism,” and agreement on the importance of securing nuclear material.

“Terrorists appear determined to buy, build or steal a weapon or nuclear material such as highly enriched uranium or plutonium and turn these raw materials into a nuclear device,” Jenkins said. “We also know that large quantities of these materials are present in both civilian and military programs.”

The danger from this “can touch us all,” and requires nations to address the threat collectively, she said.

NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

In May, the Obama administration hopes to “lock in” areas where the international community agrees on strengthening the NPT, which Burk described as “the foundation we need in order to make progress on nuclear disarmament.”

The NPT rests on three pillars: disarmament, nonproliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. [In his April 2009 speech in Prague](#), President Obama said the NPT is a bargain between those states possessing nuclear weapons and those without. Countries with nuclear weapons agree to move toward disarmament, countries without nuclear weapons agree not to acquire them, and all countries have the right to access peaceful nuclear energy.

While Burk said the 1970 treaty “may be an imperfect instrument,” it is “the best we have” and “we could never recreate it today.” All signatories not only have a strong interest in saving the NPT, but also in trying to strengthen it and further its implementation, she said.

She pointed out that the desire for cleaner energy due to climate change concerns will increase demand for nuclear power reactors, and that the international community must find a way to address that demand along with the accompanying safety, security and proliferation concerns.

“Without a robust and reliable nonproliferation regime, it would be very difficult to pursue the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the way that countries are talking about now,” she said.

Burk was cautious about the likelihood that an agreement will be reached by the time the NPT review conference concludes at the end of May. Since the treaty operates by consensus, any one of its 189 signatories can block new measures. The Obama administration has been trying to get a sense of others' priorities and look for areas of potential agreement.

"If we can come to the conference and we can tease out those areas where we agree on all three pillars ... and if we can lock those in, then we can move forward and we will certainly be in a better position," she said. "I do think that there is an area of agreement there that we can capture if the parties come to the conference prepared to do that."

NO NUCLEAR TESTING

Obama is also trying to break the deadlock holding up a fissile material cutoff treaty, which would prohibit countries from producing any more fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. In addition, Burk said, he has outlined steps for the U.S. Senate to ratify the CTBT, but she noted that even without ratification there has been a U.S. moratorium on nuclear testing since 1992, and "there are no plans to test."

"We're trying to lead by example," Burk said. "We are making it very clear that we want to lead by actions and not just words. But we can't do that alone."

Joseph Cirincione, who is president of the Ploughshares Fund, a global security foundation based in Washington, told the conference that the American push to eradicate nuclear weapons originally came from veteran security and military experts, such as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former Defense Secretary William Perry. A "paradigm shift occurred" from the center of the American political spectrum, and Obama has embraced it, he said.

But Cirincione warned that with the \$54 billion that is spent annually in the United States on nuclear weapons for defense contracts, jobs and laboratories, there are powerful interests that want to maintain the status quo, and he urged conference attendees to mobilize public and government support.

Obama said "I cannot do this alone," Cirincione said. "We have got to seize this policy moment because as surely as it has opened up, it will close. It will not stay here very long."

7. Group of Eight Ministers Urge Strong Steps Against Iran (03-31-2010)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — While the Group of Eight leading industrialized nations encourage diplomatic negotiations with the Iranian regime, they are calling on the international community to take "appropriate and strong steps" over Iran's nuclear weapons development program.

"Iran's continued noncompliance with its obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions, as well as its International Atomic Energy Agency obligations, regarding its nuclear program is of serious concern to G8 ministers," the foreign ministers said [in a statement](#).

The G8 foreign ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States ended a two-day meeting in Gatineau, Quebec, on March 30. The statement is the

latest step in efforts to pressure Iran's leaders to abandon attempts to develop nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them.

"Ministers urged in the strongest possible terms that Iran cooperate fully with the IAEA and comply with relevant UNSC resolutions," the statement said. "Ministers agreed to remain open to dialogue, and also reaffirmed the need to take appropriate and strong steps to demonstrate international resolve to uphold the international nuclear nonproliferation regime and persuade Iran to build greater international confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear program."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton flatly [told an interviewer](#) with Canadian Television (CTV) "no" when asked March 29 if the world may have to accept an Iran with nuclear weapons. But she added that the G8 is not the negotiating forum for the creation of a resolution that might impose effective sanctions against any nation.

"This was informational," she added. "We discussed the importance of the international community addressing the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran. We have a lot of work to do in the U.N."

Efforts have been under way for months by the United States, Britain, France and Germany for a new round of U.N. Security Council-imposed sanctions. But among the six nations that have been attempting to convince Iran to abandon its nuclear program, some debate has arisen over the further use of sanctions now. Russia and China have also participated in the negotiations, but have shown reluctance to seek another round of sanctions.

Clinton also told CTV that China has been part of the consultative group that has been unified throughout the negotiations with Iran's leaders. She said the entire group "has made it very clear that a nuclear-armed Iran is not acceptable to the international community. And I think as the weeks go forward and we begin the hard work of trying to come up with a Security Council resolution, China will be involved."

"As in any effort, we're going to have to try to come to some consensus. And we're in the middle of that process," Clinton added.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper [told the assembled foreign ministers](#) March 30 that actions by Iran and North Korea to develop nuclear weapons "contravene their international obligations. Both use violence and intimidation to deprive their own citizens of fundamental rights. Both are serious threats to global security."

Harper called for North Korea to return to the Six-Party Talks aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula, and for Iran to halt its nuclear activities and engage in peaceful dialogue. "We urge a heightened focus, and stronger coordinated action, including sanctions if necessary, on the Iranian regime," he added.
